

Editorial

Censoring papers a major setback

The Supreme Court's 5-3 decision Wednesday giving high school officials the authority to censor high school publications is a severe blow to First Amendment rights. The decision will hinder future high school journalists and have a chilling effect on coverage of controversial issues. In extreme cases high school administrators could turn the publications into mere newsletters.

According to the majority decision written by Justice Byron White, school officials can censor "speech that, is for example, ungrammatical, poorly written, inadequately researched, biased or prejudiced, vulgar or profane, or unsuitable for immature audiences." This broad definition gives excessive power to administrators. They are free to censor any story with which they are not comfortable.

Although there is minor precedent for this, the court did rule for student rights in the 1969 case of *Tinker vs. Des Moines*. The *Tinker* case forbid officials to expel students because they wore armbands protesting the Vietnam War, saying in the majority opinion that "students did not shed their constitutional rights to freedom at the schoolhouse gate."

However, this decision follows a trend of recent court rulings limiting high school students' constitutional rights. Two years ago in *T.L.O. vs. New Jersey* the court gave officials the authority to "reasonably" search a student's locker without a search warrant.

White, who voted with the majority in the *Tinker* case, argued that the high school setting and students' rights differ from the rights adults are granted in other settings. The rights "must be applied in light of the special characteristics of the school environment," he wrote.

But high school is designed to prepare students for college, careers and life in society. Students considering journalism careers will not receive the same experience if they are forbidden to cover sensitive issues with the specter of the censor looming.

Sue Barr, the journalism adviser for the South Eugene High School paper, recognized this disadvantage. "It's pretty difficult to teach responsible journalism without giving the kids a chance to do it. It's like showing them how to do a math problem but not letting them practice," she said.

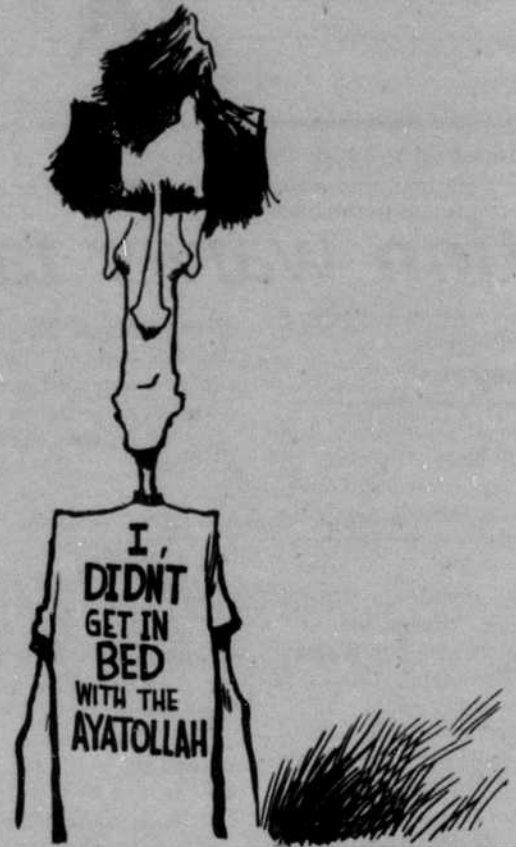
Although she does not believe the decision will affect her paper, the potential for administrative censorship remains. Tim Gleason, a journalism professor, agreed. "This decision gives administrators clear authority to interfere," he said. The cases will not involve material that is sexually explicit but on articles covering controversial subjects, he added.

An article in the *Oregonian* reported many high school advisers respect their principals and do not fear censorship. But this ruling now gives authority the right to act against sensitive material under the guise of protecting the school's educational purpose.

As Justice William Brennan argued in the dissenting opinion: Schools worried about stories creating a negative impression on the school can print a disclaimer on the story rather than eliminating the piece.

High school students have lost a valuable avenue for information and advice. Barr recognized that students usually can communicate to students about issues more effectively than adults. The newspaper is one aspect of this communication. This ruling suppresses high school journalism's creativity and importance.

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Letters

Stop Israel

The time has come for these intimidations to stop. The time has come to halt the concessions that only serve the dominance of Israel. The time has come for the Palestinians to be heard.

Not through the Arab leaders but by responding to the requests of those living under the humility of the Israeli occupation.

Israel today has become very much like "Nazi Germany." Sabra and Shatilla have become synonymous to "Auschwitz," and Rabin has worn the gloves of "Mengele."

Against whom? Against children who have no homes to live in, children who have no right to express their feelings, and children whose fathers' sense of dignity is deprived.

Forty years of appalling occupation and all that has been accomplished are slums, concentration camps and deportations. Forty years and the Palestinians are unable to distinguish between night and day. In the day they are preoccupied by the search for food,

and night the notorious Israeli soldier pays them a visit. Their only crime is the desire to live in their homeland. The land of Palestine had accommodated ethnic differences for centuries, but to Israel, attrition is the only alternative in providing "peace."

Our plea is to our fellow Americans. Palestinians must be heard and must have an equal right to live. Unfortunately, the media have always taken the side of Israel; Arabs are only heard when their view is advantageous to Israeli dominance. Moreover, the billions of dollars of tax money that only increases the might of the Israeli military should be stopped.

Fellow Americans, the integrity of your country has been humiliated because of the blatant assistance to Israel. For peace to prevail, assistance to Israel should stop and Palestinians should have an equal right to their land.

Ahmed M. Zaidan
Muslim Student Association

Bad comparison

This week, the Muslim Student Association passed out leaflets containing an obscene comparison between the Nazi death camp Auschwitz and Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps. The comparison is false for two reasons:

1) Approximately 460 people were murdered in Sabra and Shatilla. Six times that number were murdered in Auschwitz every day. Three million people died in all at Auschwitz. Sabra and Shatilla can no more be

compared to Auschwitz than the police bombings in Philadelphia can be compared to Hiroshima.

2) The murderers were Lebanese Christians, not Israelis.

This leaflet typifies the anti-Israeli disinformation campaign. Israel's enemies constantly try to undermine American support for Israel by falsely comparing Israel to the Nazis because they are afraid to discuss the real issues underlying the Arab-Israeli conflict.

A frank discussion must reveal that the Palestinian Arabs' refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist (let alone negotiate a political solution) is the real cause of the continuing conflict between the two peoples.

Other inaccuracies include the failure to mention that Egypt, not Israel, controlled Gaza for 19 years, created the camps, the poverty and the squalor that exist there today. Israel in fact tried to provide permanent housing for the refugees.

The Arab States and the UN prevented Israel from doing so Israel could be blamed, as it is today, for the problem.

If Palestinian Arabs really want "peace to prevail," their leaders must do what they should have done 40 years ago: recognize that the Palestinian Jewish nation (Israel) possesses the same right to self-determination that the Palestinian Arab nation claims for itself.

David Shayne
Law student

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

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